

Siskiyou County Schools: Are They Safe?

BACKGROUND

Public safety is a primary responsibility of government at all levels, especially for our schools. The safety programs must be inclusive for our teachers, administrators, and especially our children. While this should be a given and normal environment, recent history has shown that the assumption of safety cannot be taken for granted. The world has changed. We cannot wait for an emergency situation to occur in Siskiyou County schools before we take action.

This jury sought to first educate itself on what laws are currently in place in California with regard to school safety, and secondly, are our Siskiyou County schools complying with those laws and are they prepared should an incident occur.

SUMMARY

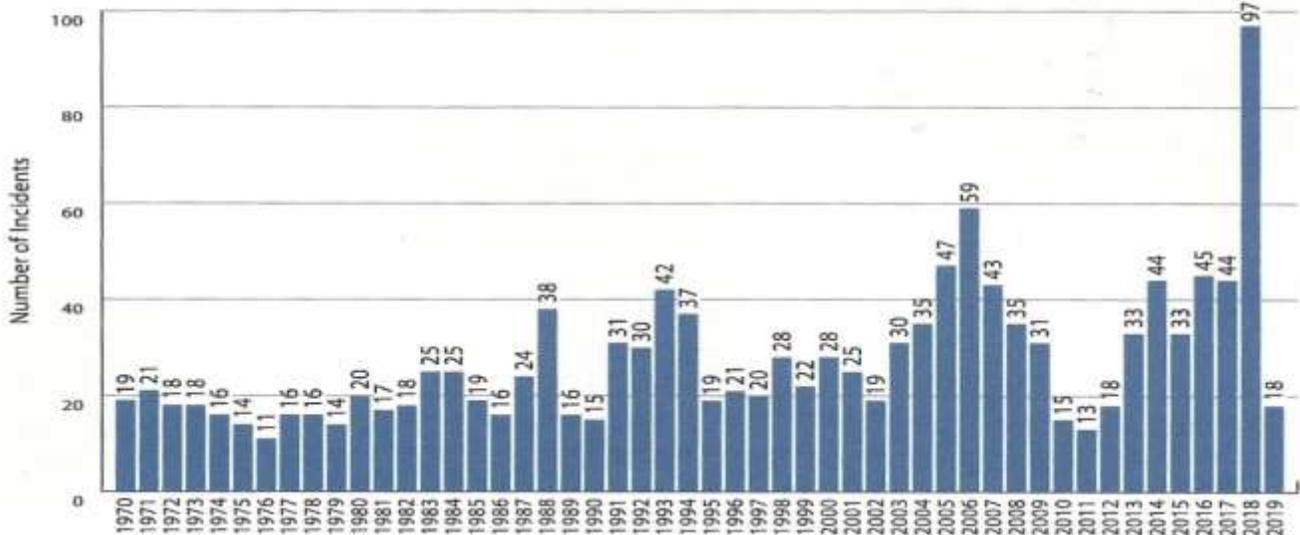
Siskiyou County has an area of 6,347 sq miles with a population of 45,000. Within this area there are 27 elementary schools, 2 charter schools and 12 high schools. This is a large area for law enforcement to cover.

As of the writing of this report, and according to data from the Washington Post newspaper, our nation has experienced more than 230 school shootings in the last two decades, not including shootings at our colleges and universities.

Statistics kept by the Center for Homeland Defense and Security are more detailed: *“each and every instance in which a gun is brandished, fired, or a bullet hits school property for any reason, regardless of the number of victims (including zero), time, day of week, or reason (e.g. planned attack, accidental, domestic violence, gang-related) in grades K-12, is recorded. Since 1970, 1,360 such incidents have been logged. (see www.CHDS.US).*

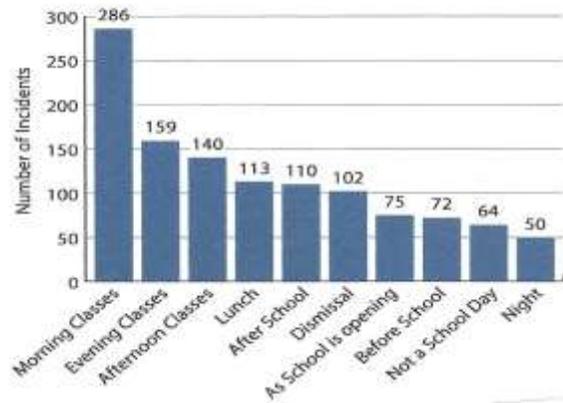
INCIDENTS BY YEAR

Based on publicly available data on incidents from 1970-present



INCIDENTS BY TIME OF DAY

Based on publicly available data on incidents from 1970-present



The Center for Homeland Defense and Security also keeps track of the time of day an incident may occur with most happening during morning classes and the least in the evening.

Location of each incident is also tracked. These firearm incidents have occurred in every state across our nation with California in the lead.

INCIDENTS BY STATE

Based on publicly available data on incidents from 1970-present



METHODOLOGY

Members of the Siskiyou County Civil Grand Jury conducted interviews, reviewed school websites, performed surveys and engaged in extensive research to determine whether our schools in Siskiyou County are compliant with the requirement set forth in the Education Code with regard to Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP).

DISCUSSION

Required school safety plans have been in place in most schools for years. On January 1, 2019, Assembly Bill 1747 (Rodriguez) amended sections of the California Education Code, Sections 32280 – 32289) and became law. Section 32280 states: *“It is the intent of the Legislature that all California public schools, in kindergarten, and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, operated by school districts, in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, community leaders, parents, pupils, teachers, administrators, classified employees, and other persons who may be interested in the prevention of campus crime and violence, develop a comprehensive school safety plan that addresses the safety concerns identified through a systematic planning process. It is also the intent of the Legislature that all school staff be trained on the comprehensive school safety plan. For the purposes of this section, law enforcement agencies include local police departments, county sheriffs’ offices, school district police or security departments, probation departments, and district attorneys’ offices. For purposes of this section, a “safety plan” means a plan to develop strategies aimed at the prevention of, and education about, potential incidents involving crime and violence on the school campus.”*

Key changes in the existing Education Code governing school safety that became effective January 1, 2019 were:

- The Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP) and any updates made to the plan must be shared with the law enforcement agency, the fire department, and the other first responder entities.
- Procedures for conducting tactical responses to criminal incidents, including procedures related to individuals with guns on school campuses and at school-related functions must be developed. The procedures to prepare for active shooters or other armed assailants are based on the specific needs and context of each school community.
- Assembly Bill 2291 requires local educational agencies to adopt, on or before December 31, 2019, procedures for prevention of acts of bullying, including cyberbullying. The bill does not require that these be placed in the CSSP, however, they may be placed in it.
- AB 2291 requires that schools operated by a school district or county office of education (COE) and charter schools annually make anti-bullying / cyberbullying training available to certificated school site employees and all other employees who have regular interaction with pupils
- Each school is to review, update, and approve its plan by March 1, every year.

Members of this Civil Grand Jury chose to determine whether or not schools within the county have Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSP) in place for their staff and students. In early April of 2019, a telephone survey was conducted with 22 schools within Siskiyou County. Of these 22 schools, six did not answer and did not return our calls, though requested to do so. One small school was unsure if they had a safety plan at all while another was still in the process of writing their plan. Three of the schools contacted were awaiting their Boards approval before the “Plan” would be filed with the Superintendent of Schools. Another small school was very reluctant to give us information over the phone and asked several questions including what student attended their school that was related to the caller. An additional three schools contacted have their CSSP posted on their school’s website, though concerns arose at the detailed information shared on one of the sites. Given the results of the survey, it is suggested that schools only post general CSSP information on websites and keep confidential information off the web site. Several schools contacted are in compliance with CEC §32286 and have their CSSP on file with the Superintendent of Schools Office. An individual interviewed advised that due to the new requirement to have a school’s CSSP on file by March 1, 2019, a little extra time was being given but all schools were expected to have them filed

accordingly and no later than March 31, 2019. The Superintendent of Schools Office is currently in the process of determining whether each of the Plans filed have met the requirements that are set forth in CEC §§32281 – 32289.

While interviewing an individual, it was discovered that all schools within the county are required to have a fire drill each month. When a drill is conducted, the date and time is logged. These must be on file at all times for inspection by administration, insurance agents, fire officials, etc. There could also be a “false” drill happening. A prospective shooter could set a false alarm causing crowds of students and staff to become a potentially large target. It was discovered that at least one school within the county has not been diligent in keeping up with their mandated fire drills.

In May of 2017, representative staff from school districts across the county participated in “ALICE” training (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate), conducted by experts in the field. Though unable to ascertain whether all schools consistently engage in ALICE drills or active shooter training, each school is encouraged to make this a priority along with other such emergency drills like fire and earthquake. The Superintendent of Schools meets regularly with local law enforcement (Sheriff and Yreka Police Department), Child Protective Services, Cal Fire, Mental Health and other agencies to review school safety and emergency strategies. Ongoing training and consistent drills in all schools are recommended by this Grand Jury to keep school staff and students as safe as possible in an emergency or active shooter situation. Further follow-up on the drills each school conducts is advised.

Many schools within the county have what is called an “open campus” policy. This allows students to leave campus for lunch. While this is desirable for students it creates the potential for a shooter to attack pupils off campus or sneak in with the returning students. A closed campus would increase control over student population and deny campus access to unauthorized individuals.

How are parents informed if an incident should happen? There are various means of how a school district within Siskiyou County notifies parents in an event of an emergency. The Superintendent of Schools Office is currently assessing an “all call communication system” similar to the County's Code Red system that could be used for all schools within the county. Also, it would be very helpful to parents if there were a standard, basic informational pamphlet that outlined the basics of the School's Safety Plans. This would be an area for future follow up.

To conclude, most of the schools within Siskiyou County are on track with the requirements of the Education Code regarding developing, implementing, periodically reviewing and filing of their CSSP. In an effort to assist schools to ensure compliance, the California Department of Education shares the table below to help schools develop their CSSP.

**Compliance Tool for a Comprehensive School Safety Plan
California Education Code sections 32280–32289**

Required and Recommended Components for a Comprehensive School Safety Plan

Note: This tool is designed to assist schools in developing and updating Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSPs). Use of this tool is optional. Each school, school district, and county office of education is responsible for compliance and familiarity with all sections of California Education Code sections 32280–32289.

Section 32280	Mandate Met	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
It is the intent of the Legislature that all school staff be trained on the CSSP	Include date and plan	Comments
Section 32281	Mandate Met (date, plan)	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
(b)(1) Plan is written and developed by a school site council (SSC) (b)(2) The SSC may delegate this responsibility to a safety planning committee made up of principal/designee, teacher, parent of child who attends the school, classified employee, and others, if desired	Include date and plan	Include planning committee roster
(b)(3) SSC/Planning Committee consulted with a representative from a law enforcement agency, a fire department, and other first responder entities in the writing and development of the CSSP -The CSSP and any updates made to the plan must be shared with the law enforcement agency, the fire department, and the other first responder entities <i>Effective January 1, 2019, Assembly Bill 1747 expanded the requirements of this section as noted here</i>	Include date and agencies	Comments
Section 32282	Mandate Made (date, plan)	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
(a) CSSP includes, but is not limited to the following:	Include date and plan	Comments
(1) An assessment of the current status of school crime at the school and at school-related functions that may be accomplished by reviewing one or more of the following types of information, is included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Office Referrals <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance rates/School Attendance Review board <input type="checkbox"/> Suspension/Expulsion Data <input type="checkbox"/> California Healthy Kids Survey <input type="checkbox"/> School Improvement Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Local law enforcement Juvenile crime data <input type="checkbox"/> Property Damage data 	Include date and plan	Describe the data reviewed and key analysis points, and table of findings Document how this information was shared with SSC/planning committee
(2) Appropriate strategies and programs that provide and maintain a high level of school safety and address the school's procedures for complying with existing laws related to school safety are identified. These include but are not limited to the following:	Include date and plan	Additional items to consider: Threat Assessment Student Support Teams
(A) Child Abuse Reporting procedures	Include date and plan	Include board policy and site-specific steps

Section 32282	Mandate Made (date, plan)	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
(B) Disaster procedures, routine and emergency plans, and crisis response plan are developed and include adaptations for pupils with disabilities and the following:	Include date and plan	Use the Standardized Emergency Management System as detailed in the California Emergency Services Act 8607 and the supporting <i>California Code of Regulations</i>
<p>(i) Earthquake emergency procedure system that includes:</p> <p>(I) A school building disaster plan</p> <p>Note: Building disaster plan emergency procedures and drills for the following situations that may be associated with an earthquake or other emergency event should be developed and adapted to each school's needs and circumstances in collaboration with first responders and community partners. These situations may include but are not limited to:</p> <p>Fire; Relocation/Evacuation; Bomb Threat; Bioterrorism/Hazardous Materials; Earthquake; Flood; Power Failure/Blackout; Intruders/Solicitors; Weapons/Assault/Hostage; Explosion; Gas/Fumes</p> <p>(II) a drop procedure (students and staff take cover) drop procedure practice must be held once each quarter in elementary; once each semester in secondary schools</p> <p>(III) protective measures to be taken before, during, and after an earthquake</p> <p>(IV) a program to ensure that pupils, and certificated and classified staff are aware of and are trained in the procedures</p>	Include date and plan	<p>Detail response procedures may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lock Down • Secure School • Active intruder or other threat(s) <p>Describe information on training and exercise drills</p>
(ii) Procedures are established to allow a public agency, including the American Red Cross, to use school buildings, grounds, and equipment for mass care and welfare shelters during an emergency	Include date and plan	Comments
(C) Suspension/Expulsion policies and procedures	Include date and plan	Refer to board policy, include site-specific steps, if needed
(D) Procedures to notify teachers of dangerous pupils	Include date and plan	Refer to board policy, include site-specific steps, if needed
(E) Discrimination and Harassment Policy that includes hate crime reporting procedures and policies	Include date and plan	Include complaint and investigation procedure
(F) If a Schoolwide Dress Code exists, include prohibition of gang-related apparel	Include date and plan	Comments
(G) Procedures for safe ingress and egress of pupils, parents, and school employees to and from school site		Reference campus visitor policies. Other items may include but are not limited to: crossing guard program, safe routes to school, pedestrian, vehicle and bicycle policies, traffic safety
(H) Maintain a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning at the school	Include date and plan	Comments
(I) Rules and procedures on school discipline are established	Include date and plan	Comments

Section 32282	Mandate Made (date, plan)	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
<p>(J) Procedures for conducting tactical responses to criminal incidents, including procedures related to individuals with guns on school campuses and at school-related functions must be developed. The procedures to prepare for active shooters or other armed assailants are based on the specific needs and context of each school and community</p> <p>Note: Effective January 1, 2019, AB 1747 requires the inclusion of these procedures</p>		Consult with local law enforcement partners on developing these procedures
<p>(c) Where practical, consult, cooperate and coordinate with other school site councils or school safety planning committees</p>	Include date and plan	Comments
<p>(d) Evaluate and amend the plan as needed and at least once each year, to ensure the plan is properly implemented</p> <p>An updated file of all non-sensitive safety-related plans and materials is readily available for inspection by the public</p>	School must review, update, and approve by March 1	Comments
<p>(e) The Legislature encourages that policies and procedures aimed at the prevention of bullying be included in the CSSP</p> <p>Note: Effective January 1, 2019, Assembly Bill 2291 requires local educational agencies to adopt, on or before December 31, 2019, procedures for prevention of acts of bullying, including cyberbullying. The bill does not require that these procedures be placed in the CSSP, however, they may be placed in it</p> <p>AB 2291 requires that schools operated by a school district or county office of education (COE) and charter schools annually make bullying and cyberbullying training available to certificated school site employees and all other employees who have regular interaction with pupils</p>	Include date and plan	<p>Comments</p> <p>The Legislature encourages, and the California Department of Education (CDE) concurs, that these procedures and other related policies be included in the CSSP</p> <p>Online Bullying Prevention Training Programs can be accessed on the CDE</p> <p>Bullying Publication and Resources web page at https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/bullyres.asp</p>
Section 32282.1	Mandate Made (date, plan)	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
<p>(a) Schools are encouraged to include clear guidelines for the roles and responsibilities of the positions listed below (if used by the district):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health professionals, school counselors <input type="checkbox"/> Community intervention professionals <input type="checkbox"/> School resource officers, police officers on campus <p>(b) The guidelines are encouraged to include strategies to create and maintain positive school climate and mental health protocols for the care of students who have witnessed a violent act at any time</p>	Include date and plan	Include school counselors, nurses, coaches, athletic directors, and other positions, if used
Section 32284	Mandate Made (date, plan)	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
<p>Plan may include procedures for responding to the release of a pesticide or other toxic substance from properties located within one-quarter mile of a school</p>	Include date and plan	Comments
Section 32286	Mandate Made (date, plan)	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
<p>(a) Each school review, update, and approve its plan by March 1, every year</p>	Include date and plan	See Section 32288 for guidance on school district or COE approval timeline

Section 32288	Mandate Made (date, plan)	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
(a) Submit the plan to school district office or COE for approval	Include date and plan	California Department of Education recommends that the plans be approved within a month of school approval or as soon as possible
(b)(1) Before adopting its CSSP, SSC/Planning Committee presented the school safety plan at a public meeting at the school site that allowed for public opinions	Include date, agenda, and supporting communications	See notification requirements in Section 32288(b)(2) and recommendations in Section 32288(b)(3)
<input type="checkbox"/> Each school district or COE must annually notify the CDE by October 15 of any schools that have not complied with Section 32281	Written notification to State Superintendent	Comments

Note: This tool is designed to assist schools in developing and updating CSSPs. Use of this tool is optional. Each school, school district, and COE is responsible for compliance and familiarity with all sections and requirements of California *Education Code* sections 32280–32289.

California Department of Education

January 2019

FINDINGS:

F1: CSSP plans at some schools are substandard and have not been reviewed annually.

F2: Some schools that have their CSSP posted on a website have disclosed information that could assist criminal activity.

F3: During the Grand Jury’s investigation it was discovered that at least one of the schools surveyed was not conducting required monthly fire drills.

F4: County schools currently do not have a uniform alert system for notifying parents in an emergency. The Superintendent of Schools is currently assessing an “all call” system similar to the County’s Code Red system.

F5: ALICE training and drills have been conducted at some schools to prepare for a potential emergency situation.

F6: Education Code §32282(G) procedures for safe ingress and egress for pupils, parents, and employees were implemented at some schools within the county.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R1: The Superintendent of Schools should ensure that all schools in Siskiyou County are in compliance with Education Code §32282 and have all schools’ CSSP on file.

R2: Schools need to review their websites and remove information that might aid criminal activity.

R3: The Superintendent of Schools or designee should follow up with each school or school district regularly to ensure their drills are being conducted. In turn, the Superintendent of Schools or designee could require the Administrator or governing board of each school district to file a report with their office showing the dates and times of fire drills or any other emergency drills that are being conducted.

R4: The Superintendent of Schools should continue an assessment of the “on call” system, such as the county’s Code Red system, with a goal of implementation by January 1, 2020.

R5: More frequent ALICE Training for school staff is advised as well as increased parent awareness. Consider including a safety procedure element such as a brochure or pamphlet in parent teacher conferences so that everyone knows what to do.

R6: Consider designating all schools as a closed campus to minimize the potential for criminal activity.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the Siskiyou County Civil Grand Jury requests the Superintendent of Schools respond to the findings and recommendations in this report and take action as appropriate.

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that report of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.